

THE OSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT, AND
THE BROTHERHOOD
OF HUMANITY



THE STUDY OF
OCCULT SCIENCE AND
PHILOSOPHY, AND
ARYAN LITERATURE

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MORE than one great scholar has stated that there never was a religious founder, whether Aryan, Semitic or Turanian, who had INVENTED a new religion, or revealed a new truth. These founders were all TRANSMITTERS, not original teachers. They were the authors of new forms and interpretations, while the truths upon which the latter were based were as old as mankind. Thus every nation received in its turn some of the said truths, under the veil of its own local and special symbolism; which, as time went on, developed into a more or less philosophical cultus, a Pantheon in mythical disguise.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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(b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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Doors and windows are cut out in order to make a house; the utility of the house depends on the *empty* spaces. Thus, while the *existence* of things may be good, it is the *non-existent* in them which makes them serviceable. —LAO TZU

THEOSOPHY

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THE FUNCTION OF A TEACHER

SO deeply has the Western mind been impressed with conceptions of "Power by Authority" that the theosophical definition of a Teacher is still difficult to grasp. Our dictionaries supply several definitions of Authority, but each one equates the word with "power"—power to dictate, command, or convert. There could be, in the Theosophical lexicon, another and more philosophical meaning of authority, which would have nothing to do with "power" in this sense, but rather derive from recognition of a teacher's special qualifications for *knowing*, rather than for manipulating the destinies of others.

However, as H.P.B. pointed out in the *Key to Theosophy*, most of us are still the children of our age, born to a psychological inheritance in which Knowledge and Authority have been wrongly identified, because it has been thought that an Authority can give us knowledge, just as men of Power can command our actions. Even when the rigid theological indoctrination of medieval times is decried by champions of "free thought," the same identification often persists, for in this case it has been assumed, contrariwise, that the only worthy teachers are those who profess the humility of ignorance—those who decline to try to instruct their fellows. The very idea of a Knowledge which a teacher is qualified to present seems subversive of liberal aims. Consequently, it is precisely because H. P. Blavatsky represented herself as the teacher of a *gnosis* that Theosophy has been so widely regarded as but another sect. Many of her followers—those who were bound to be someone's followers in any case—reinforced this suspicion of the

free-thought world, for H.P.B. has been dogmatically quoted and treated as an Authority for Knowledge by many "Theosophists."

H. P. Blavatsky's definition of a Teacher, however, has an entirely different orientation. She herself offered, for instance, not authority as to morals or creed, but rather an opportunity for concentrated study. When H.P.B.'s chief disciple, William Q. Judge, called her teacher—"She is the teacher for this century"—may he not have had this, rather than "authority," in its usual sense, in mind? The logic is simple: For any man to learn, he must some day end his casual wanderings through the arenas of thought and give *concentrated* attention to something, somewhere; learning comes from meditation. Better it often is, we all come to know, to read one important book over and over again, pausing to think deeply upon the implications of its content, than to continue to "survey the field." And in the study of that one book it is, primarily, the prolonged dwelling upon particularly significant passages which is most rewarding. This contact with literature allows our minds to grow, while survey-reading merely increases our "learning"

When a man accepts a teacher, in the Theosophical sense, he does not primarily "accept authority." What he contracts to do is to give concentrated attention to what that teacher has said. It is by this means, and only this means, that any writer can be fully understood. Our usual practice is to sum up any book or author on the basis of certain statements which, we think, allow us to establish orientation in a familiar category. Our judgments, thus formed, may be either correct or incorrect, but, in either case, we are far from fully understanding the author—which can only come from gradually comprehending delicate balances of interrelationship between all that is said on a score of different topics. H.P.B., if recognized by Theosophists as a true teacher, must be regarded as one whose public utterances are especially worth studying in their entirety, and therefore one to whose words persistent attention will be given. To pursue such study, and to pursue the further work of deepening our sensitivity to the complicated interrelationships existing between different portions of her work, is indeed a lifetime's task. The student hopes that this intensive concentration, however, will provide an invaluable orientation in the comparative study of all other writings he may encounter. To this extent, and to this extent only, is his self-generated discipleship an act of faith.

These considerations should make it clear that use of isolated statements by H.P.B. as doctrinal substantiation of personal assertions is both unjustifiable and misleading. A teacher is not to be understood by authoritative quotation; and only those who seek to be considered as authorities want to be understood in that way. A teacher is to be understood by the sort of concentration which, focussed upon the inter-relatedness of the whole body of writing, upon the shifting emphasis which occurs when different facets of the same subject are discussed, brings finally a sense of the purview and methods of the teacher.

There will some day come an end to the citing of H. P. Blavatsky's words, however authoritative on Theosophical doctrine they may be, simply to "prove" this or that contention—because some day H.P.B. and her philosophy will be sufficiently well understood so that the foolishness and futility of such an approach will stand clearly revealed. She will live most truly as Teacher when that time has come.

THE GODS MOST REAL

Anytas: Answer this one fair question. Do you believe in the gods?

Socrates: Of course I do, Anytas.

Anytas: In all of them, or only some?

Socrates: In all of them, and many more than you do.

Anytas: Gods of your own, no doubt?

Socrates: No, no, gods of your own, Anytas. I believe in every god you have in mind, and in the gods as they seem in the mind of Meletos, and in the gods as Homer imagined them—

Anytas: Are not these the same gods?

Socrates: Is your mind exactly like the mind of Meletos?

Anytas: No, thank Zeus, it is not!

Socrates: Then the gods he conceives will be everywhere a little different from the gods of your thinking—

Anytas: I am not asking about the gods that are in anybody's mind. I am asking about the gods as they are on Mount Olympos! Do you believe the gods of Olympos to be sure and solid and real?

Socrates: I think the gods are just as real as we are. Isn't that real enough?

—MAXWELL ANDERSON

JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

IN an age of materialistic thinking, it is almost impossible to explain the nature of any spiritual idea without losing, in the act, something of its reality. Universal Truth does not consent to be caged within a narrow framework of words. The use even of symbols, the best of all physical-plane representations, is valuable only up to a certain point. Beyond that point, the illuminating force of intuition must come into operation, filling the void created by the deficiencies of language and "reason." Even then, if intuition be weak, or if through misuse or lack of exercise, it be cramped or atrophied, the perceptions may be of little value.

The idea of a *Path*—beginning at one's feet, leading onward through wood and vale into the blistering sands of the desert, rising gradually to slopes of mountain heights, and fading finally out of sight—is one of the most graphic symbols that the human mind is capable of conceiving. Not only does it stimulate the imagination, awakening in mind and heart the latent desire for adventure; it also arouses the Will to a determination that, some day, we must travel to the end of that Path. In it is contained the whole story of spiritual evolution. But to grasp the meaning of the symbol philosophically, the idea must be spiritualized. It must be understood that the Path spoken of in Holy Writ is an invisible one. It is the journey of the Soul—the Path of the Divine Ego—which begins not so much *where* one is, but with one's self, *as he is*. For without moving, it is said, is the travelling on this Path.

The Path of spiritual evolution does not follow what some other person thinks or says one should do. It is that which each individual himself sees as proper to be done, and does. "*Becoming* the Path" means putting into practice those ideals and perceptions which one holds to be true. Each such doing is an increment gained in the process of becoming. But where is the person of today for whom theory and practice are always *one*, for whom there is never any discrepancy between knowing and doing? Where is the individual who always acts up to the best of his perceptions? For most, practice and profession

oftentimes stand at variance. Even St. Paul, an initiate of the early Christian School, expressed the difficulty of keeping his feet firmly on the Path when he said: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." We may *see* quite clearly where the path of righteous action lies, but in our inability (rather, lack of determination) to conform, we pursue courses that are sometimes diametrically opposed. Progress in discipleship consists in the closing up of this breach between theory and practice.

Men of today find it difficult to understand how the whole course of spiritual evolution can be initiated and completed within the invisible laboratory of man's own nature. So accustomed are we to acting from without instead of from within, to being guided by what other people say or do, or by the cry of public opinion, that we seldom hear, much less follow, the small voice of our own conscience. How is the man of modern learning to be made to understand, for example, that there is a path on which every thought, word, and act is a step, where there are no corners around which he may step aside without being detected? Some, indeed, even among those calling themselves disciples, have been known who sought to indulge their vices without being seen, who attempted to "dodge the Master's eye," by pretending to walk the straight line of virtue when in secret they did not. But on the journey of the Soul, deception of this kind is not possible, for Krishna, the Charioteer, sits *in* the chariot with the disciple, looking through the disciple's own eyes.

The barriers and pitfalls that line the Path of true discipleship are to be found in the inner psychic nature of the man himself, in the desires, habits and tendencies of his personal ego. On this invisible journey of the Soul, prejudice may take the shape of an insurmountable wall of stone; suspicion, the form of an impenetrable jungle of briars; anger, a pack of howling wolves; lust, a whirlpool of raging waters; and hatred, a precipitous cliff over which one may fall to certain death. It is a path on which every thought and feeling literally comes to life.

Some there be who attempt to travel this path externally, who are inclined to blame circumstances and conditions for their difficulties, to point the finger of accusation at other people for blocking their road to happiness. But how can any external condition or event prevent a man from acting righteously, if that is his heart's desire? How can any outside power or being thwart one's determination to learn? Progress

toward divinity is not measured by the degree that one builds for himself beautiful exterior surroundings, but by the degree that he masters the passion of his lower self. True progress is found in the man who obeys the voice of his conscience, who lives up to the best that he knows, in each event. For, in the words of a Master: "He who does the best he knows how, and that he can do, does enough for us."

Each age has its aspirants to discipleship who, having heard of the mysteries of the Path, eagerly desire to enter it. But of those so desiring, how many seek to enter in the proper way? How many certify their desires with changed patterns of conduct, with modes of life befitting the rules of discipleship? How many authenticate their aspirations with humble willingness to work unselfishly in the cause of human brotherhood? For all too many, unfortunately, the desire for discipleship is an intellectual aspiration instead of a spiritual yearning, a selfish ambition of the personality requiring some outer sign of recognition.

Recognitions, initiations, external signs and passwords—all undoubtedly have their place, and will be bestowed at the proper time—that is, *after* transformation of self has begun, not before. But for those who have the courage and humility to take the inward step for the sake of all, and not for what they alone may gain, outer signs are of small concern. On this inner journey of the Soul, the act of becoming brings its own reward—the thrill of a fresh beginning, the inspiration of a new vision, the power and beneficence of a firm position assumed out of regard for union in purpose with others. The taking of the position of Soul brings a joy and certainty that require no external words of either acceptance or praise. Who can say but perhaps this joy and certainty, of themselves, are a preliminary token of recognition, a silent acknowledgment of the fact that one's determination has been seen and recorded!

Few individuals, in any one life, succeed in "becoming the Path." The most that can be said is that, in moments of inspiration, we occasionally skirt its borders. Like children at a parade, we run along the side, filled with awe and astonishment at its beauties, difficulties, dangers, temptations and promises. But how many actually enter upon it? How many possess the courage and the daring to assume the position of Masters in their kingdoms? How many have the determination to at least *try* to make their thoughts, feelings and acts conform to the

dictates of their highest perceptions? Only such deserve the right to be considered disciples. Only such have the power to create in the waves of etheric substance a vortex of shining light. Only such attract the attention of the Master.

Who sets himself a course of discipline, yet follows the inclinations of the senses, walks at variance with the path; he walks in unison with the path only as he follows his discipline.

Who knows he should mortify the mind, yet allows his thoughts to wander, deserts the path; he adheres to the path only as he mortifies the mind.

Who plans for himself a course of study, yet suffers old habits to draw him away, fails of becoming the path; he becomes the path only as he pursues his studies.

Who knows he should speak the truth, yet faintheartedly tells a lie, forsakes the path; he becomes the path only as he speaks the truth.

Who knows he should arise at a certain time, yet arises an hour later, is off the path; he is on the path only as he arises at his appointed hour.

Who knows he should perform certain sacrifices, yet squanders his resources on self, forsakes the path; he adheres to the path only as he performs his sacrifices.

Who sees in all things what is proper to be done, yet does it not, fails of becoming the path; he becomes the path only as he acts true to his highest perceptions.

THE DOUBLE MAN

By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. . . . I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence of and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

WHY ACCEPT THEOSOPHY?

GENERALLY speaking, a student may find it easier to answer this question for others than to answer it for himself. When it is asked by a stranger or inquirer, there are certain very practical and reasonable things to say to him. One can say, with William Q. Judge—

Without Karma and Reincarnation evolution is but a fragment; a process whose beginnings are unknown, and whose outcome cannot be discerned; a glimpse of what might be; a hope of what should be. But in the light of Karma and Reincarnation evolution becomes the logic of what *must* be. The links in the chain of being are all filled in, and the circles of reason and of life are complete. Karma gives the eternal law of action, and Reincarnation furnishes the boundless field for its display.

—and having said this, or something like it, other good things to say will probably occur. The literature of Theosophy is rich with suggestions and discussions of the common problems of human beings. The *Key to Theosophy* alone seems to cover almost the entire field of basic questions, so that no one who studies the writings of the teachers of Theosophy needs to be at a loss for something to say about why Theosophy may be accepted.

There is a subtler inquiry, however, to which the student himself may attend. There is no one, surely, who becomes involved in the Theosophical movement who does not, at some time or other, find that, while he has made some sort of profession of faith or conviction that Theosophy is "true," and formed a measure of association with others affirming the same conviction, he is nevertheless overtaken by some sort of inner turbulence or dissatisfaction. The beautifully logical explanations he may be able to give to others concerning the value of Theosophy do not, somehow, seem to apply to this kind of problem. Doubtless, one may say to oneself, the counsels of *The Voice of the Silence* speak to my troubled condition, yet the cipher of the inner life is either on such a grand scale, or the difficulties we experience in these intervals are so complex, that the *Voice* seems voiceless indeed.

The truly unpleasant question, the question that needs answering most of all, is that which insists upon knowing whether what we have

"accepted" is really Theosophy, or something else which passes under that name. Why, after all, are we "in" the Theosophical Movement?

The paths to work for Theosophy are many, yet obscure. Probably only a small minority of students could claim that they were drawn into the movement by the irresistible logic of the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*. The role of Karma, here, and the role, even, of the *Skandhas*, may be fully as decisive as any conscious and deliberate choice. This is especially true of children born into Theosophical families, who can claim the virtue of "discovering" Theosophy only by a retrospective logic which reaches into past lives.

The fact of the matter is that we do not really know, in any final sense, why we have accepted Theosophy. All that we can know is why we continue to accept it, and what sort of Theosophy it is that we have accepted. To know how and why we are drawn to Theosophy would mean a sure and unwavering grasp on the mysteries of mind, heart, and will. It would mean, also, an insight into one's own *soul*-history.

The distinction between accepting Theosophy, and knowing why, is an important one, for it seems likely that it is the same as the distinction which divides those who endeavor to become philosophers from those who are "converted" to a religion. The process of conversion is a swift, emotional decision through which a man rallies his forces and gives his all—or says he will give his all. Forever after, he is on the "right side" of all religious controversy. His association with others of like persuasion is the great thing. He may have private imperfections to deal with, he may be a trial to others and, on occasion, a burden to those who love him dearly, but these are small matters alongside the major victory of having made the "right" choice.

The trouble with the conversion process is that it tends to destroy any interest in self-examination and self-questioning. In place of this profoundly important inner activity, a furious external activity of "labor for the cause" quite often develops, flanked by the twin psychological attitudes of partisanship and self-righteousness. The converted man, not having thought very much about what he accepts, naturally assumes that thought, in the sense of serious questioning, is not very important. What is important is the progress of the party, church, or cult. And, being unused to questions, he tends to have few doubts about his own ideas, so that he finds making flat and final definitions of "progress" an easy and agreeable task.

The futility of this sort of "acceptance" of Theosophy, so far as the welfare of the Movement is concerned, is quickly evident when we reflect that any pursuit which sets aside as unimportant the inner processes of psychological self-discovery has really nothing at all to do with the Theosophical Movement. Conversion techniques in Theosophy could only "churchize" and "politicalize" its work—in other words, destroy it. The process of self-questioning, of eternally asking *why* we are theosophists, or trying to be, is the sole protection of the movement against the sectarian tendencies inherent in human nature, the sole protection of the philosophy from perversion into a new orthodoxy with creeds to advocate and cant phrases to declaim.

There are only philosophical or *soul* reasons for studying Theosophy and for adopting, so far as one is able, the attitude of mind which Theosophy represents. For joining a Theosophical association, frequenting Theosophical meetings, even for buying Theosophical books, there may be an admixture of less admirable reasons. This is a conclusion bound to occur to anyone who examines his own conduct in the light of the highest principles. The "sins" of the lower nature, more particularly, the sins of the personality, are not erased by a declaration of Theosophic faith. A devious man is still devious in some part of his nature after he associates with a Theosophical body. An ambitious man whose inner insecurities make him seek a position of dominance wherever he goes will still be drawn as by a magnet to places where he will be seen and heard. These are inevitable facts and processes. However, these weaknesses, when in complex association with other qualities of another sort,—the sort that brings the student into Theosophy, and not into a church or a political movement,—are compelled by the very nature of the Theosophical Movement to "fight for their lives." It is this struggle, and not the outward events through the years, which is really chronicled in the Theosophical Movement, and the outward events were shaped by the outcome of such a battle *within* the principal actors of the primary cycle of the Movement's history.

The psychotherapists of our time speak often of "adjustment." A profound law is hidden behind this idea. It is, perhaps, that the inner, psychic or moral life of human beings always requires some hitching-post of reality—whether actual or illusory. The moments of flux, of feeling "at loose ends," of painful indecision, are really the moments of choice of which the teaching speaks. Always, at such times, the

choice seems to be between two almost intolerable alternatives, and here the important question is, Intolerable to *what*?

Men choose—they are bound to choose—compelled by the principles of their nature. So, the ambitious man is inevitably led to decide between his hunger for power and the subtle warning that personal power has no place in the Theosophical Movement—is, in fact, a ridiculous caricature of the kind of “power” which the true student seeks. The devious man is sooner or later confronted by the fact that his less than honest ways are pretenses to conceal his fear, to hide his weakness or unmanliness. But in a Movement which offers no more to the individual than an opportunity for *self*-discovery, how foolish it is to fear discovery by others! What have they to do with us? To continue in deviousness, then, after this realization, becomes a kind of repudiation of the real meaning of Theosophy, changing what has been “accepted” into something else—a kind of “church” Theosophy which is capable of being believed but not of being practiced.

There may be a way of pursuing Theosophical studies without being presented with personal crises of this kind, but if there is, it does the world and the students so engaged little good. We might even say that Theosophy is not really understood at all until the student declares to himself that his “accepting” Theosophy means his readiness to face these crises as they come to him—until he realizes that only by this kind of reconstruction of his own character can he work for the Theosophical Movement and be of some value to himself.

This is the dynamic adjustment sought by the student on the path of discipleship. It is the decision to make one’s peace with nothing less than the law of life, and as life is always a living, moving thing, so also is the expression of its law. What in the life of the philosopher corresponds to the “great settlement” of the religious convert is the discovery that he is equal to the trial of living under the law of life, or Karma. This is the “resignation” spoken of in *The Bhagavad-Gita*.

When a man obtains this kind of adjustment, he no longer has any enemies. That is, he is incapable of resenting other men, or of feeling emotionally antagonistic toward them and opposing them as persons. He has, in short, stepped upon the plateau where all the philosophers have stood when first they began to be genuine servants of mankind.

But why should we talk of "far-off divine events" when our problems are here and now? The reason is plain. Unless a student of Theosophy prepares himself by assiduous practice to meet the waves of Karma which rise from the past, he will not be *able to bear* the pressure of such a choice. That is why the question, Why do I accept Theosophy? is so tremendously important. Rigidities of mind and feeling at the beginning may grow into Chinese walls of psychic blindness when the moments of choice arrive. And they always arrive.

The wandering fancy—that irresponsible shadow of the creative imagination—often reveals by its questionable jaunts where our weaknesses lie. In what roles does the fancy cast us when the sentinels of the soul relax their guard? Are we unappreciated in our present place? Do we long for a circle of open-mouthed admirers who wait poised for every jewel of enlightenment we choose to offer? Could we tell the assembled United Nations a thing or two, if some extra-karmic autocrat would tie the delegates—gag them, too, perhaps—so that we could talk at them uninterrupted for a couple of hours? And how about appearing before the Prime Ministers of the world, while they sit in secret, closeted with great decision? Couldn't our voice ring with the unearthly genius of special knowledge, and make them *see*?

Childish innocencies, perhaps; indulgences we easily set aside; yet if anyone *else* could invade the private sanctum of these dreams and mock at our vanities we might, without stopping to think, reach for a handy thunderbolt. It has happened before, and within the history of the Theosophical Movement. The only qualification that ought to be added is that the people who made the trouble for the Theosophical Movement *thought* they had been badly used, their talents overlooked, their purity of heart and eagerness to teach neglected. Thus Col. Olcott, who felt his prerogatives usurped by H.P.B.; thus Annie Besant, who bravely bore "betrayal" and righteously threw the movement of her time into a turmoil from which it recovered only after lapse of many years; so all the other bruised and disenchanted paracletes who wanted "adjustment," but with something else than the bitter blows dealt them by their own Karma.

Then there are other, darker dreams of vengeful satisfaction, bespeaking a thirst for inquisitorial authority. The temptation to rule in hell rather than serve in heaven is more than a Miltonic metaphor. The

mood of wondering how it would feel to bring our power to bear upon lesser gatherings, the more supine assemblies of conventional religion, is not unknown to the vagrant imagination of Theosophical students. How we might stir and amaze their pedestrian minds, with our special talents! The thought that this is how churches came to be does not always provide the needed antidote for unleashed dreaming in this direction. The sense of having a special capacity for watching over the "morality" of others fathers delusion upon delusion, until, finally, it seems a natural part of our destiny to assume this absorbing task.

Truly, "acceptance" of Theosophy is a variable thing, not always signifying what we try to make it mean when on our best metaphysical behavior. We can say, perhaps, that acceptance of Theosophy means much more than we think it means, at almost any time in our lives. Among other things, it involves composing a private, individual version of the Voice of the Silence, for personal consumption and assimilation. Where is the student who will boast that he is no longer "ignorant of the dangers of the lower *Iddhi*"? To understand them, he will have to translate the *Voice* into the idiom of his own psychic life. This is the undertaking we have partially or wholly accepted, partially or wholly rejected, in what we mean by "accepting" Theosophy.

MINUTE OBSERVATION

Self is the rider on the chariot of this body guided by the intellect as charioteer, drawn by the senses as powerful horses, controlled by way of the mind serving for the reins. Thus runs the vehicle over the course of experience. The Self thus conditioned by the senses and the mind is called the Enjoyer by those who know. He who is forsaken by the Charioteer (intelligent discrimination), and has no idea of guiding the reins—his mind—in the proper manner, has no control over the senses, and is like a driver of restive horses. He who has the intellect for his driver and the mind for proper reins, is able to reach the other end of the course, the highest essence of the All-Pervading. THAT ever concealed in all, is never manifest, but is grasped by the sharp intellect of those who are trained to minute observation.

—*Kathopanishad*

NOTES ON THE KEY

THE affirmation of a Universal Brotherhood platform in the Theosophical Society served primarily, we may say, as a focal point for all synthesizing efforts undertaken by humanitarians, just as "synthesis" was the keynote of H. P. Blavatsky's projection of true tolerance into religio-philosophical study. Here, in both instances, by the avowed determination to seek, sympathetically, all the truth that could be found in alien viewpoints, was furnished the only valid psychological point of departure for attempts to make the warfare between religion and science constructively intelligible. H.P.B.'s remarks in *The Secret Doctrine* on the importance of re-establishing deductive habits of reasoning are here pertinent, for the Aristotelian "inductive" tradition had, in point of fact, dominated both religious and scientific mind-sets throughout Western history. The "first assumption" of universal brotherhood reproached, by implication, all compartmentalized forms of thought and extolled the virtue of learning how to transcend rigid categories. Thus we find that the greater proportion of H.P.B.'s writings were devoted to balancing extremities of perspective, both religious and scientific, and *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* are made weighty by her demonstrations of the many ways in which synthesis may be attempted without destroying whatever valid content was otherwise concealed by partisan allegiances.

In the closing section of the *Key*, entitled "Practical Theosophy," however, another sort of Theosophical "work" is suggested, that of opposing all practices which restrict freedom of thought or freedom of moral choice:

ENQ. What do you consider as due to humanity at large?

THEO. Full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position, or birth.

ENQ. When would you consider such due not given?

THEO. When there is the slightest invasion of another's right—be that other a man or a nation; when there is any failure to show him the same justice, kindness, consideration or mercy which we desire for ourselves. The whole present system of politics is built on the oblivion of such rights, and the most fierce assertion of national selfishness.

It is no small task to list the ways in which "another's right" may be "invaded." An analysis of social, political, religious, and economic forms is demanded, and, in the determination to oppose all denials of ultimate human freedom of thought, the inductive method of reasoning must then be employed. The logic is easy to follow: In the determination of "another's right," we either proceed from the assumption that a certain type of social order or a certain religious structure must be preserved and that the individual can have no valid rights if they interfere with this order or structure, or one can assume that each must be allowed to frame his "goal for living" in his own way. We begin our analysis of valid rights, then, with each man's conception of his own rights, however distorted we may suspect them to be. Adopting *his* premises, we proceed within that context in an effort to discover, without pre-judgment, their implications in terms of effects upon others. Since these premises are not necessarily our own, we may need to suspend our own premises, at least temporarily, and in this sense proceed "inductively." We withhold final evaluation, in other words, and restrain ourselves from the temptation to use "the deductive method" unjustifiably by applying our own standards as rules of thumb. Yet it is the fundamental assumption of Universal Brotherhood which inspires such justifiable restraint, the one *always justifiable* assumption from which we "deduce" the necessity for tolerance.

A man's affiliations, beliefs and aspirations may not, on this view, ever be lumped together and judged at once. Recognizing that each person is a complexity of profundity and naïveté, brotherly and unbrotherly motives, we reason outward from each one of his separate premises, and only then are we entitled to conclusions. When a conclusion is reached in such a manner, then, and only then, are we able to give of our impersonal best in determining whether an individual or an organized movement needs our support and encouragement or whether we are obliged to offer opposition. Just as Christianity is not really an entity of itself, but rather a whirling universe of paradoxical beliefs and hopes, so is every individual. We must consider every facet of a man's nature in terms of its potentially constructive impact, and never allow labels or categories to define our judgment. This process, finally, leads to the perception that the Theosophist is engaged in warfare only against those who war against the right of freedom for other individuals.

In how many ways are human beings tempted to "invade another's right"? Obviously, we must begin with an examination of the characteristic attitudes manifested towards children in Western civilization, since arbitrary restrictions upon youth are, for any culture, the first and most revealing examples of invading the "inviolable right" of "free choice." Unless one is convinced of the reality of a universal brotherhood of soul, the child will always be judged in relation to a social, familial or religious pattern—never in terms of his own premises. The nineteenth-century tendency to consider children as "little men and women" was actually often hypocritical, for the young were not thought capable of forming their own destinies, but considered ready only for shaping to fit adult standards of behavior. All humanitarian movements in education have begun with *the child's own premises*, the great educators placing themselves, as it were, within the mind of the child and attempting to see the universe as it there appears. Deviations from accepted thoughts and forms of behavior were to be studied, perhaps questioned, but never assumed arbitrarily to merit either reprimand or punishment. How else can any parent or teacher show "kindness, consideration or mercy" to those entrusted to his care?

Political practice, also, leads to the "oblivion of rights" whenever the assumptions upon which contrary opinions are assessed involve nothing more than "deductive reasoning" from the premises of the status quo. Unless a man places himself, metaphysically, within the mind of his opponent, unless the Whig knows how to become a Tory and the Tory a Whig, it is impossible to have any conception of what the rights of either may be, for these rights must be assessed, at least in part, in their own terms. It is clear enough that the present world-society leaves no more room for genuine political autonomy than did the Victorian age, if as much. How many Americans are willing, even in the cloister of their own homes, to become mentally "Communist" in order to understand the assumptions and promptings which are peculiar to the Communist faith? How many Russians would even know how to begin to understand "Americans," provided they had the courage for such an attempt? And in the economic field, how many in any land have attempted to apply "inductive reasoning" to the matter of understanding their commercial rivals?

The present condition may perhaps be attributed to the long centuries during which the grand deductive principle of Universal Brother-

hood was almost totally obscured; we arrogantly classify "friends" and "foes" without much attention to our first premise. In any case, there is little doubt that the consideration of that sort of "mercy" which we desire for ourselves is precisely the sort we have been describing. *We* wish to be judged *on our own terms*, the terms of the values which we have assigned to various facets of our thought and action, and are dismayed when we discover that we are forever being judged on the basis of someone else's values.

Theosophy opens up the perspective of a vast evolutionary journey for each soul, during which each individuality clothes itself in scores of different forms. The opinions we reject today we may affirm tomorrow, the points of view which seemed to us most enlightened in the past may now appear to be obstacles to the general progress. And yet, while we are honestly striving for progress and illumination, we can but work through the partial truths which have become our temporary guides. All the opinions we detest either have been held or will be held by us in the future—an esoteric fact which should inspire us to see that no man can be judged, finally, except by himself, since he must learn *through* his own peculiar combinations of attitude and circumstance.

These considerations raise another and especially subtle dimension of the question of happiness. For in "Practical Theosophy," H.P.B. has two paradoxical things to say. First, she states that "joys and pleasures teach us nothing; they are evanescent, and can only bring in the long run satiety," but later explains the Theosophical attitude as one which demands our avowal to never deprive someone else of the "fragrance" of life. The discovery that any of our aspirations directed toward the attainment of evanescent goals are insufficient must be a self-discovery. If we take away another's "pleasure," on the ground that *we* know that he or she is either falling into danger or pursuing an unworthy aim, we are interfering with the opportunity of that individual to learn for himself. Psychologists have thoroughly documented the conclusion that the child who is forced to become submissive will invariably develop an inordinately powerful or "over-reactive" drive toward the very pleasures that have been denied. It is in this basic sense, then, that Theosophy can never legitimately be held to condone a merely moralistic attitude.

PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHICULES

We shall in vain interpret their words by the notions of our philosophy and the doctrines in our schools.

—LOCKE

Knowledge of the lowest kind is *ununified* knowledge; Science is *partially unified* knowledge; Philosophy is *completely unified* knowledge.

—Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*

NEW accusations are brought by captious censors against our Society in general and Theosophy, especially. We will summarize them as we proceed along, and notice the "freshest" denunciation.

We are accused of being illogical in the "Constitution and Rules" of the Theosophical Society; and contradictory in the practical application thereof. The accusations are framed in this wise:—

In the published "Constitution and Rules" great stress is laid upon the absolutely non-sectarian character of the Society. It is constantly insisted upon that it has no creed, no philosophy, no religion, no dogmas, and even no special views of its own to advocate, still less to impose on its members. And yet—

"Why, bless us! is it not as undeniable a fact that certain very definite views of a philosophic and, strictly speaking, of a religious character are held by the Founders and most prominent members of the Society?"

"Verily so," we answer. "But where is the alleged *contradiction* in this? Neither the Founders, nor the 'most prominent members,' nor yet the majority thereof, constitute *the* Society, but only a certain portion of it, which, moreover, having no creed as a body, yet allows its members to believe as and what they please." In answer to this, we are told:—

"Very true; yet these doctrines are collectively called 'Theosophy.' What is your explanation of this?"

We reply:—"To call them so is a 'collective' mistake; one of those loose applications of terms to things that ought to be more carefully

NOTE.—This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for October, 1889, and was reprinted in THEOSOPHY for October, 1916.

defined; and the neglect of members to do so is now bearing its fruits. In fact it is an oversight as harmful as that which followed the confusion of the two terms 'buddhism' and 'bodhism,' leading the Wisdom philosophy to be mistaken for the religion of Buddha."

But it is still urged that when these doctrines are examined it becomes very clear that all the work which the Society as a body has done in the East and the West depended upon them. This is obviously true in the case of the doctrine of the underlying unity of all religions and the existence, as claimed by Theosophists, of a common source called the Wisdom-religion of the secret teaching, from which, according to the same claims, all existing forms of religion are directly or indirectly derived. Admitting this, we are pressed to explain, how can the T. S. as a body be said to have no special views or doctrines to inculcate, no creed and no dogmas, when these are "the back-bone of the Society, its very heart and soul"?

To this we can only answer that it is still another error. That these teachings are most undeniably the "back-bone" of the Theosophical Societies *in the West*, but not at all in the East, where such Branch Societies number almost five to one in the West. Were these special doctrines the "heart and soul" of the whole body, then Theosophy and its T. S. would have died out in India and Ceylon since 1885—and this is surely not the case. For, not only have they been virtually abandoned at Adyar since that year, as there was no one to teach them, but while some Brahmin Theosophists were very much opposed to that teaching being made public, others—the more orthodox—positively opposed them as being inimical to their exoteric systems.

These are self-evident facts. And yet if answered that it is not so; that the T. S. as a body teaches no special religion but tolerates and virtually accepts all religions by never interfering with, or even inquiring after the religious views of its members, our cavillers and even friendly opponents, do not feel satisfied. On the contrary: ten to one they will non-plus you with the following extraordinary objection:—

"How can this be, since belief in 'Esoteric Buddhism' is a *sine qua non* for acceptance as a Fellow of your Society?"

It is vain to protest any longer; useless, to assure our opponents that belief in *Buddhism*, whether esoteric or exoteric, is no more expected by, nor obligatory in, our Society than reverence for the monkey-

god Hanuman, him of the singed tail, or belief in Mahomet and his canonized mare. It is unprofitable to try and explain that since there are in the T. S. as many Brahmins, Mussulmans, Parsis, Jews and Christians as there are Buddhists, and more, all cannot be expected to become followers of Buddha, nor even of Buddhism, howsoever esoteric. Nor can they be made to realize that the Occult doctrines—a few fundamental teachings of which are broadly outlined in Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism"—are not the *whole* of Theosophy, nor even the whole of the secret doctrines of the East, but a very small portion of these: Occultism itself being but one of the Sciences of Theosophy, or the WISDOM-Religion, and by no means the whole of Theosophy.

So firmly rooted seem these ideas, however, in the mind of the average Britisher, that it is like telling him that there are Russians who are neither Nihilists nor Panslavists, and that every Frenchman does not make his daily meal of frogs; he will simply refuse to believe you. Prejudice against Theosophy seems to have become part of the national feeling. For almost three years the writer of the present—helped in this by a host of Theosophists—has tried in vain to sweep away from the public brain some of the most fantastic cobwebs with which it is garnished; and now she is on the eve of giving up the attempt in despair! While half of the English people will persist in confusing Theosophy with "esoteric *Bud-ism*," the remainder will keep on pronouncing the world-honoured title of Buddha as they do—*butter*.

It is they also who have started the proposition now generally adopted by the flippant press that "Theosophy is not a philosophy, but a religion," and "a new sect."

Theosophy is certainly not a philosophy, simply because it includes every philosophy as every science and religion. But before we prove it once more, it may be pertinent to ask how many of our critics are thoroughly posted about, say, even the true definition of the term coined by Pythagoras, that they should so flippantly deny it to a system of which they seem to know still less than they do about philosophy? Have they acquainted themselves with its best and latest definitions, or even with the views upon it, now regarded as antiquated, of Sir W. Hamilton? The answer would seem to be in the negative, since they fail to see that every such definition shows Theosophy to be the very synthesis of Philosophy in its widest abstract sense, as in its special qualifications. Let us try to give once a clear and concise definition of

Theosophy, and show it to be the very root and essence of all sciences and systems.

Theosophy is "divine" or "god-wisdom." Therefore, it must be the life-blood of that system (philosophy) which is defined as "the science of things divine and human and the causes in which they are contained" (*Sir W. Hamilton*), Theosophy alone possessing the keys to those "causes." Bearing in mind simply its most elementary division, we find that philosophy is the love of, and search after wisdom, "the knowledge of phenomena as explained by, and resolved into, causes and reasons, powers and laws." (*Encyclopediæ*.) When applied to god or gods, it became in every country *theology*; when to material nature, it was called *physics* and *natural history*; concerned with man, it appeared as *anthropology* and *psychology*; and when raised to the higher regions it becomes known as *metaphysics*. Such is philosophy—"the science of effects by their causes"—the very spirit of the doctrine of *Karma*, the most important teaching under various names of every religious philosophy, and a theosophical tenet that belongs to no one religion but explains them all. Philosophy is also called "the science of things possible, inasmuch as they are possible." This applies directly to theosophical doctrines, inasmuch as they reject *miracle*; but it can hardly apply to theology or any dogmatic religion, every one of which *enforces belief in things impossible*; nor to the modern philosophical systems of the materialists who reject even the "possible," whenever the latter contradicts their assertions.

Theosophy claims to explain and to reconcile religion with science. We find G. H. Lewes (*History of Philosophy*, vol. 1., Prolegomena, p. xviii.) stating that "Philosophy, detaching its widest conceptions from both (Theology and Science), furnishes a doctrine which contains an *explanation of the world and human destiny*." "The office of Philosophy is the systematisation of the conceptions furnished by Science. . . . Science furnishes the knowledge, and Philosophy the doctrine" (*loc. cit.*). The latter can become complete only on condition of having that "knowledge" and that "doctrine" passed through the sieve of Divine Wisdom, or Theosophy.

Ueberweg (*History of Philosophy*) defines Philosophy as "the Science of Principles," which, as all our members know, is the claim of Theosophy in its branch-sciences of Alchemy, Astrology, and the occult sciences generally.

Hegel regards it as "the contemplation of the self-development of the ABSOLUTE," or in other words as "the representation of the Idea" (*Darstellung der Idee*).

The whole of the Secret Doctrine—of which the work bearing that name is but an atom—is such a contemplation and record, as far as finite language and limited thought can record the processes of the infinite.

Thus it becomes evident that Theosophy cannot be a "religion," still less "a sect," but it is indeed the quintessence of the highest *philosophy* in all and every one of its aspects. Having shown that it falls under, and answers fully, every description of philosophy, we may add to the above a few more of Sir W. Hamilton's definitions, and prove our statement by showing the pursuit of the same in Theosophical literature. This is a task easy enough indeed. For, does not "Theosophy" include "the science of things evidently deduced from first principles," as well as "the sciences of truths sensible and abstract"? Does it not preach "the applications of reason to its legitimate objects," and make it one of its "legitimate objects"—to inquire into "the science of the original form of the Ego, or mental self," as also to teach the secret of "the absolute indifference of the ideal and real"? All of which proves that according to every definition—old or new—of philosophy, he who studies Theosophy, studies the *highest transcendental philosophy*.

We need not go out of our way to notice at any length such foolish statements about Theosophy and Theosophists as are found almost daily in the public press. Such definitions and epithets as "new fangled religion" and "ism," "the system *invented* by the high priestess of Theosophy," and other remarks as silly, may be left to their own fate. They have been and in most cases will be left unnoticed.

Our age is regarded as being pre-eminently critical: an age which analyses closely, and whose public refuses to accept anything offered for its consideration before it has fully scrutinized the subject. Such is the boast of our century; but such is not quite the opinion of the impartial observer. At all events it is an opinion highly exaggerated since this boasted analytical scrutiny is applied only to that which interferes in no way with national, social, or personal prejudices. On the other hand, everything that is malevolent, destructive to reputation, wicked

and slanderous, is received with open embrace, accepted joyfully, and made the subject of everlasting public gossip, without any scrutiny or the slightest hesitation, but verily on a blind faith of the most elastic kind. We challenge contradiction on this point. Neither unpopular characters nor their work are judged in our day on their intrinsic value, but merely on their author's personality and the prejudiced opinion thereon of the masses. In many journals no literary work of a Theosophist can ever hope to be reviewed on its own merits, apart from the gossip about its author. Such papers, oblivious of the rule first laid down by Aristotle, who says that criticism is "a standard of judging well," refuse point blank to accept any Theosophical book apart from its writer. As a first result, the former is judged by the distorted reflection of the latter created by slander repeated in the daily papers. The personality of the writer hangs like a dark shadow between the opinion of the modern journalist and unvarnished truth; and as a final result there are few editors in all Europe and America who know anything of our Society's tenets.

How can then Theosophy or even the T. S. be correctly judged? It is nothing new to say that the true critic ought to know something at least of the subject he undertakes to analyse. Nor is it very risky to add that not one of our press Thersites knows in the remotest way what he is talking about—this, from the large fish to the smallest fry;* but whenever the word "Theosophy" is printed and catches the reader's eye, there it will be generally found preceded and followed by abusive epithets and invective against the personalities of certain Theosophists. The modern editor of the Grundy pandering kind, is like Byron's hero, "*He knew not what to say, and so he swore*"—at that which passeth his comprehension. All such swearing is invariably based upon old gossip, and stale denunciations of those who stand in the moon-struck minds as the "inventors" of Theosophy. Had South Sea islanders a daily press of their own, they would be as sure to accuse the missionaries of having invented Christianity in order to bring to grief their native fetishism.

How long, O radiant gods of truth, how long shall this terrible mental cecity of the nineteenth century *Philosophists* last? How much

*From Jupiter Tonans of the *Saturday Review* down to the scurrilous editor of the *Mirror*. The first may be as claimed one of the greatest authorities living on *fencing*, and the other as great at "muscular" thought reading, yet both are equally ignorant of Theosophy and as blind to its real object and purposes as two owls are to day-light.

longer are they to be told that Theosophy is no national property, no religion, but only the universal code of science and the most transcendental ethics that was ever known; that it lies at the root of every moral philosophy and religion; and that neither Theosophy *per se*, nor yet its humble unworthy vehicle, the Theosophical Society, has anything whatever to do with any personality or personalities! To identify it with these is to show oneself sadly defective in logic and even common sense. To reject the teaching and its philosophy under the pretext that its leaders, or rather one of its Founders, lies under various accusations (so far unproven) is silly, illogical and absurd. It is, in truth, as ridiculous as it would have been in the days of the Alexandrian school of Neo-Platonism, which was in its essence *Theosophy*, to reject its teachings, because it came to Plato from Socrates, and because the sage of Athens, besides his pug-nose and bald head, was accused of "blasphemy and of corrupting the youth."

Aye, kind and generous critics, who call yourselves Christians, and boast of the civilisation and progress of your age; you have only to be scratched skin deep to find in you the same cruel and prejudiced "barbarian" as of old. Were an opportunity offered you to sit in public and legal judgment on a Theosophist, who of you would rise in your nineteenth century of Christianity higher than one of the Athenian *dikastery* with its 500 jurors who condemned Socrates to death? Which of you would scorn to become a Meletus or an Anytus, and have Theosophy and all its adherents condemned on the evidence of false witness to a like ignominious death? The hatred manifested in your daily attacks upon the Theosophists is a warrant to us for this. Did Haywood have you in his mind's eye when he wrote of Society's censure:—

O! that the too censorious world would learn
 This wholesome rule, and with each other bear;
 But man, as if a foe to his own species,
 Takes pleasure to report his neighbour's faults,
 Judging with rigour every small offence,
 And prides himself in scandal. . . .

Many optimistic writers would fain make of this mercantile century of ours an age of philosophy and call it its *renaissance*. We fail to find outside of our Society any attempt at philosophical revival, unless the word "philosophy" is made to lose its original meaning. For wherever we turn we find a cold sneer at true philosophy. A skeptic

can never aspire to that title. He who is capable of imagining the universe with its handmaiden Nature fortuitous, and hatched like the black hen of the fable, out of a self-created egg hanging in space, has neither the power of thinking nor the spiritual faculty of perceiving abstract truths; which power and faculty are the first requisites of a philosophical mind. We see the entire realm of modern Science honey-combed with such materialists, who yet claim to be regarded as philosophers. They either believe in naught as do the Secularists, or doubt according to the manner of the Agnostics. Remembering the two wise aphorisms by Bacon, the modern-day materialist is thus condemned out of the mouth of the Founder of his own inductive method, as contrasted with the deductive philosophy of Plato, accepted in Theosophy. For does not Bacon tell us that "Philosophy *when superficially studied* excites doubt; when thoroughly explored it dispels it;" and again, "a *little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth of philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion*"?

The logical deduction of the above is, undeniably, that none of our present Darwinians and materialists and their admirers, our critics, could have studied philosophy otherwise than very "superficially." Hence while Theosophists have a legitimate right to the title of *philosophers*—true "lovers of Wisdom"—their critics and slanderers are at best PHILOSOPHICULES—the progeny of modern PHILOSOPHISM.

DANGERS OF THE CATEGORIES

Our ideas are deficient in relevance generally, perhaps because we tend to think in terms of such rigid categories that the relationships between things escape us.

Our minds are rational as human minds go, but in trying to avoid the irrational we have fallen into the habit of mechanistic understatement which often leads to under-myth. The result is that we lack an adequate vocabulary for discussing the greatest problems of man and for propagandizing our ideals, in fact, we lack the verbal tools for developing our personalities by impressing our ideals upon our own minds.

These seem to me among the major weaknesses of Western culture from the one-world point of view.

—EDMOND TAYLOR

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

HOW does the Theosophical concept of promulgating Universal Brotherhood—thus bettering the lot of mankind as a whole—compare with various socio-economic reform movements calculated to achieve what is commonly called "One World" and over-all prosperity?

Both types of "reform," the Theosophical Movement and socio-economic movements, we might say in pointing to similarities, are devoted to the improvement of man and the conditions which surround and affect groups of men; both "reform movements" to some extent transcend the limitations of racial, creedal, and national clannishness. But beyond this point, what other significant likenesses can be defined? As to the basic objectives to be realized, and the ways and means of achieving such realizations, a considerable discrepancy seems to exist. The basic *philosophies* of the Theosophical Movement and of most socio-economic ideologies are certainly different, though cooperation between the two is easily possible.

Undoubtedly there are some groups of social idealists, and many idealistic individuals, who uphold "humanist" values—"the dignity of man," and the "inalienable rights" of man—which include freedom of expression and conscience. Yet valid *reasons* for supporting the "rights" of individuality seem obscure and blurred, due probably to obscure and blurred ideas as to what man essentially is. By and large, the socio-economical movements of the Western World, such as communism, fascism, and capitalism (to mention only a few), vaguely support orthodox psychology's theory that man is a complex animal who is shaped by the master-moulds of group conditioning (environment) and heredity. Needless to say, a mechanistic theory of this sort lends little support to the humanistic hopes of nineteenth-century idealism; the importance, nobility, and meaningfulness of individual man is little talked about. Yet even when a superficial, animalistic view of man is supposedly accepted, the logical thing to do, for those who can't help wanting to improve present conditions, seems to be to advocate more humane systems of government, remove physical environmental factors which are weakening humanity, raise the world-standard of living, establish a "brotherhood" on the basis

of *mutual* contentment.

The Theosophical Movement represents the application of a much more dynamic and challenging program of progress. All genuine reform is held to be primarily an *individual* matter, which occurs as man seeks to understand the significance, relatedness and purpose of his own being with all "beings." Humanistic hopes can be rationally explained and supported in these terms: man is a soul, an integral, individual character, experiencing evolution through a form or body. Man is morally responsible because he has the power to choose between rapport with "the universe" and attempted exploitation of its opportunities. Heredity and environment are two of the tools of justice, results which represent the individual and racial karma of decisions perhaps made long before. The Theosophic doctrine teaches that man is, in a sense, a little "universe" within the great universe, and thus the understanding and improvement of the one means a proportionately increased understanding and improvement of the other.

The Theosophical idea of promulgating brotherhood then, is both esoteric and psychological, and concerned primarily with the emancipation of the soul. Socio-economic movements are devoted to the change of systems; the happiness of man is seen in terms of economic security, the improvement of environmental conditions, and the discovery of new scientific vistas to be discovered for man's material happiness. The ethical surge, however, may be the same.

How can parents and teachers avoid being overprotective of children and allow them the experiences which are necessary for growth?

There are many discussions of such problems in magazines which tell parents what to do, and why "protection against overprotections" is to be recommended. But the Theosophist has an additional obligation: he needs to get at the *causes* of overprotectiveness in relation to man's dual nature rather than to content himself with specific admonitions. In order to do this, three broad traditions at work in the Western world must be examined in the light of the attitudes they encourage in parents and teachers. These traditions variously answer the question, "What is my duty to my child?", for each answer is directly dependent upon what the child is thought to be, essentially.

In the Christian tradition, man is considered to be conceived in sin, and therefore to be inclined largely toward sin throughout his life.

This may be in part because the Christian projects supreme goodness and strength *outside of himself* into his concept of God, which leaves himself always inferior, weak, and dependent. The purpose of life, in these terms, is to avoid as much evil and temptation as possible, in order to achieve the goal of heaven which awaits, as reward, the least evil of men. This concept of the *inherent sinfulness of the child* implies that the parents' duty is almost entirely to protect children from themselves and the follies of society. The weakness attributed to the child's nature encourages such Christian parents—weak, too, but at least more experienced with evil—to make choices for him.

According to the materialistic view, on the other hand, man is held to be simply and solely a highly developed animal, the product of heredity and environment. To parents the young child is entirely neutral, plastic material, which it is their duty to mold as they see fit. Whatever values the child should adopt must be injected into his character patiently and methodically, as if with a hypodermic needle. Here, again, parents feel the necessity of choosing for their child. As a rule, the goal of this molding process is conceded to be the successful adjustment of the child to the norm of contemporary culture, so that he will be able to live amicably with his fellows.

It is not difficult to recognize the seeds of over-protection in these two examples. Now, the third view—the Theosophical view—describes man as primarily a being of individual choice. Even the child is a being of his own making, his essential character formed by choices from long past lives. His most important business on earth, consequently, is the development of inner strength for a better future. This is the concept of man as a self-evolving soul.

But just what is a parent's duty to a "self-evolving soul"? We think it is simply to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to soul-growth—an atmosphere of moral awareness which precipitates the making of choices. The soul's powers of discernment and judgment must grow. The child must exercise his own powers himself if he is to learn; no one else can do it for him. He is obligated to understand the world around him, but can be allowed to do so *in his own terms*, so long as consideration for others is shown.

If the parent concludes that the most important development is in the capacity for making decisions and in the maturity with which problems are met, and if he can let this philosophy color his daily perspec-

tive, the chances of being over-protective will diminish. If the child fails, or does wrong, such experiences the parent may consider food for learning rather than as calamity. The parent, however, does have the responsibility of presenting suggestions, and constructive criticism as he sees the need, for it is also the Theosophical teaching that a child comes to a particular family and situation in order to learn from them.

Any parent may well ask himself, "Could it be an unconscious desire that my child remain dependent upon me that causes this over-protective instinct to manifest?" Such a parent needs to remember that it is his or her responsibility to help develop in the child a desire to be self-dependent. The baby, loved and cherished and given a sense of security in very early life, should gradually learn to depend less and less on the parent. The parent's natural urge to "protect" is fitting during infancy, but if, later on, everything is done for the child, all decisions made for him, he has little chance to develop a spirit of individual creativity. The young parents who want to avoid becoming over-protective follow the plan of nature: their love draws the baby into life and provides a source from which the child may grow; it shelters the children when they can be helped by it; then, parents strive to develop gradually in the child a sense of self-reliance, dependability, responsibility, and to draw out its latent powers. As the child matures, parents find other interests after gradually allowing the child to live its own life.

An important issue to ponder in answering the remainder of the original question is, "Who determines what experiences are necessary for growth?" To a great extent the *child* should, as exhibited by his needs and enthusiasms, for these comprise the growing-tip of learning for him as a soul. To a certain extent, too, the parents have a definite responsibility to use their powers of discrimination in the child's behalf. Ideally, decisions should be made cooperatively, the parent taking an advisory role, the child remaining the final judge—at least in a field where he can deal with the consequences of his choice intelligently. Summing up, then, the most effective way that parents may avoid being over-protective is—as in avoiding anything not to be desired—to understand first all the elements in the situation. Then it is possible to examine carefully all those forces at work in the culture which tend to encourage over-protectiveness, and to decide if, or to what extent, they may be irrational directing agents.

A TRAVELER'S NOTES

THE SYMBOLISM OF TREES

The Eternal Tree has its root in the sky and its branches falling on earth. It is Brahman, pure Spirit, and in truth, is called the Immortal. All the worlds rest on that Spirit and beyond It no one can go.

—*Katha Upanishad*

Of all the trees of the forest, I am Ashwattha, the Pimpala tree.

Among that which is evolved, O Arjuna, I am the beginning, the middle and the end. (The root, the sap, and the leaves, flower and fruit.)

I am endless Time itself and the Preserver whose face is turned on all sides.

I am the season of Spring, the time of flowers.

Men say that the Ashwattha, the eternal sacred tree, grows with its roots above and its branches below, the leaves of which are the Vedas; he who knows this, knows the Vedas. Its branches growing out of the three qualities, with the objects of sense as the lesser shoots, spread forth, some above, and some below; and those roots which ramify below in the regions of mankind are the connecting bonds of action. Its form is not thus understood by men; it has no beginning, nor can its present constitution be understood.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, Ch. x and xv

This is the Tree of Life, the Asvatta tree, only *after* the cutting of which the slave of Life and Death, MAN, can be emancipated.

Secret Doctrine I, 536

. . . the plant whirls through seven changes and becomes a sacred animal. . . .

Stanzas of Dzyan, VII

TREES play an important role in the journey of the pilgrim: They shade his road by day. They shelter him from rain at night. Their breath regenerates the air he breathes. Bees build in them their honeyed combs. Leaves may cure him and fruit nourish him.

They are landmarks to the region where man can breathe with ease; beyond their line of growth, the pilgrim must beware.

Their dead branches procure fuel, enable him to warm himself and cook his food.

They are to the vegetable kingdom what higher animals are to the animal kingdom—a link individualizing toward a higher evolution.

They stand as finger-posts to Heaven—they are harps to the Winds.

They borrow the strength of the earth and of the mineral kingdom to give it to their surroundings.

Their roots grow deep in the Earth (Matter) and their foliage expands in Space (Spirit).

Their magnetism feels and selects, revivifies or poisons.

The green of their leaves has a deep occult significance related to the development of man in our Round.

Their constitution offers many symbols to the enquiring mind.

They sing a hymn to eternal Life, renewing themselves as the serpent. They are trees of Life, of Being, of Knowledge.

* * * * *

Science itself has found that trees are the bridge between the vegetable and the animal world. It acknowledges and studies the intimate connection between trees and men, the electrical and magnetic affinities which pass between them.

Both Aristotle and Plutarch thought that the trees had perception, passions, reason. In older times birth was associated with the planting of a tree and there was thought to be a mysterious bond between the child and the tree, indicating in the growth of the tree the state of health of the child. The branches of trees were used for religious purpose and for magic, not to mention their medical uses, from the greatest antiquity. The Arabs believed in the spirits of trees, which they called Jinns; they knew these had close association with the elements. Trees were connected both with deity and the mystical forces in nature. That is why it was said: "The fruit and the sap of the Tree of Life bestow immortality." In Africa, special trees were planted in guarded enclosures, considered sacred, and which only the initiated had the right to enter. The Red Indians and the Polynesians made protecting totems of selected trees. Druids held oaks as "the holy trees in whose luxuriant branches a serpent dwelleth (wisdom) and cannot be dislodged": they propitiated before cutting their branches. In India, too, those versed in mystical knowledge propitiate before cutting a tree. There is a charming Jataka tale, relating the sacrifice of the spirit of a tree, awakening wisdom and compassion in the heart of a king. In *Kwang Tse*, Book IV, a profound truth is brought to light through an incident involving an altar-tree, a carpenter, and his apprentice.

Let us consider the intimate relationship of the trees to the rain. Water is essential to all life processes and a stimulus to the plant kingdom. "The Spirit of God moveth upon the face of the waters" (Gen.

I). In the Scandinavian Mythology, the honey-dew, food of the gods, falls during the night upon the tree of life from the divine waters—the birthplace of the gods. The green trees bring the blessings of rain, while the plant kingdom may be described as the great alchemist, which, alone of living things, has mastered the secret of converting the sun's rays into material food.

Cut down forests and the climate will change, the springs dry up. One of the reasons for the change of temperature in California and its present problem of water is due to the indiscriminate cutting of big trees incident to exploitation of the land. Let us take a few examples.

The Sequoia groves actually create streams: the roots of these trees fill the ground, forming a thick sponge which absorbs and holds back the rains and snows which their swaying tops have called from the sky; they act as would dams, allowing the waters to ooze and flow gently; evaporation is prevented by their thick foliage, and the thirsty winds pass over their heads without drying the soil. The natural fall of old trees clears the ground for fresh growths and mellows the earth to provide them better nourishment.

Other trees such as the eucalyptus and the fig indicate the presence of water. In an ancient Indian treatise on agriculture we read that in an area three cubits west from the spot where a fig-tree grows, one can find a vein of sweet water, two and a half purushas deep; that there is water by the trees that are sappy, have long branches, or are spreading. The art of ascertaining the presence of water through the study of the vegetable kingdom reached a great perfection in India, where it was in the past a matter of common knowledge. And in the West we all know about the property of "divining" found in the forking branches of the willow tree. It bends towards the invisible spring within the earth, it is said, when one attuned to the process wields the rod.

Pines are sky-loving trees and fire-worshippers. They are the toughest of trees for enduring the high altitude of the timber line, the withering storms, the ice or the heat of the summits. They dispense health through their breath and restore tired lungs and bodies; to lie or sleep under certain of their species is an actual medicine. Their branches were and are still used for religious festivals. It is for good reasons that the pine was chosen as an emblem of Christmas. In the triune shape of some pines, we find the symbol of the triangle and the Pyra-

mids. Some are called fir-trees, since they possess the power to sparkle brightly. Their evergreen is representative of duration during the passing of the seasons.

An interesting pointer to the law of evolution and progress in the vegetable kingdom is found in the fact that certain trees such as the Redwoods—the giants of millennia past—have evolved their own protection, even against the attacks of worms and insects; they have generated so much tannic acid in their bark that the insect which tries to bore its way through is killed and tanned into leather! (So, by analogy, does the pilgrim develop endurance during his outdoor life, and the disciple during his initiation.)

Plants have their sympathies and antipathies, either for elements of other kingdoms or for their own. There is a very close attraction between the oak and the pine. In certain parts of California, it is possible to witness actual marriages between the two friends, which grow afterward as one, without interfering with each other's strength. We know that where a poisonous plant grows, in its surroundings can be generally found the plant which is its antidote. And we would never finish writing if we had to quote the medicinal properties of the barks and leaves of some trees and the many uses of their saps. The more one observes and thinks, the more the examples crowd in.

The pilgrim in his close and loving companionship with Nature learns more and more what are the reactions between trees, man, elements, and kingdoms. In touching a tree, he senses its being made of *earth*—which is light and fire crystallized; of *fire*—which is earth, sun, and space; of *water*—which is rain, sap, and the power of growth which spells sacrifice; of *air*—which is the medium of light, the breath of life, the transmitter of seeds. And beyond the throbbing of all these powers in motion, he contacts that mysterious essence, the Spirit of Life, which permeates all living substances, and makes them grow toward an ideal goal. Creation, preservation, destruction and regeneration follow in regular sequence as elsewhere. The pilgrim can see the connection between the tree and the three regions of the Universe:

<i>The Earth</i>	The Root	The World of Desire
<i>Heaven</i>	The Trunk	The World of Form
<i>Atmosphere</i>	The Branches	The World of Creation
<i>The Luminous Essence</i>	Leaves, Flowers, Fruit, The fragrance	The Formless World

The tree is the body and the crown of the plant kingdom; it represents also the body of man. In the symbol of the Cross we find the image of the tree as well as that of man. Standing in the soil, with its trunk upright and its arms extended, it grows from matter into light and reaches all the cardinal points of the Universe. The meaning of the Cross and the Crucifixion is hinted at in this statement of *The Secret Doctrine*:

"The 'tree' is man himself . . . and the Serpents . . . the conscious *Manas*, the connecting link between Spirit and Matter, heaven and earth." (*S.D.* II, 98.) As the tree, man should use the lower forces only to grow towards the light until no worm of sense can cripple the flow of the life-sap onwards.

Between man and trees is found an association which baffles many a scientist. In *The Secret Doctrine*, we find mention of the mysterious link between man and trees, since the vegetable kingdom must "*develop and continue its further evolution through man.*" (*S.D.* I, 159.) The forest, it is said, is a symbol of a man's life-time. (*S.D.* II, 637.)

The body of the plant, says the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, is exactly like the body of man; the hair of man corresponding to the leaves, his skin to the dry bark, his flesh to the soft tissues, his nerves to the fibrous tissues, his marrow to the central pith or sap. In *Sankara Misra*, the similarity of healing a wound of both man and plant is recorded. *Mahidas Aetareya* includes herbs and trees along with animals in the organic world.

The psychic feelings of plants are such that they may be influenced according to the magnetism of the person touching them or caring for them. A good gardener, it is said, should be clean in habits and pure in mind; then will his plants grow luxuriantly—provided he can offer them a good soil and plenty of water, air and sunshine.

The protection the plant kingdom has offered to holy men is brought through tales of all religious faiths: the Bodhi-tree of Buddha, the olive-trees of Jesus. . . . Teachers and Gurus taught their disciples under trees in all climes. They were Serpents or Dragons of wisdom; they aspired heavenward, drew food from the spaces beyond, but their roots plunged deep into the problems of Humanity.

The ancient *Laws of Manu* have codified the order of planting trees as obligation of kings and well-to-do, so as to shade the travellers on

the roads. The hymns of the *Rig-Veda* bestowed blessings on all plantings. The *Gathas* enjoin the duty of planting to shade, cool and nourish the world. Zarathustra was supposed to have taught men to plant trees. So with Osiris in Egypt and many others.

The respect for great and noble trees often led our ancestors to a worship of their Spirit of Life. In China and India was this particularly prevalent; also in certain parts of Europe before the great onslaught of "civilization" blotted out the natural feeling of gratitude and veneration growing in the heart of earlier races towards "the divine gifts."

Pilgrims on the roads of life need to recall and relearn the ABC of the Alphabet of Nature. They are the signs of a science and appreciation which transcend by far what the ignorant call pure fairy tales. Nature unaided, fails. So does man, without Nature, the Great MOTHER, by his side.

THE GENIE OF THE TREE

A King, in olden days, built himself a palace; and, to sustain the dome of his banquet hall, he desired to have a single column, prodigious in its height and strength. There was, amidst the trees of his gardens, a *ficus religiosa* which for hundreds and hundreds of years had covered the surroundings with its shade and had become sacred to his people. He gave the order to cut it down to serve his purpose.

The Genie who lived in the tree thought to himself, "I cannot go elsewhere in such an emergency, for my life is linked to the term of life of the tree; when it perishes, I perish; that is the least of my worries. But, alas, what will become of all the young trees, born of the tree and myself, which grow under my protection? I must find a way to save them."

Night came. The King was resting in his magnificent room when he was awakened by a mysterious light, and he saw by the side of his couch an unknown face, whose appealing eyes were streaming with tears.

"Who art thou, whose feet touch not the ground, and why dost thou cry?"

"All in thy kingdom know me, O King; I am the Spirit of the tree thou hast decided to fell. For a thousand years have I stood in the

splendour of my foliage and dispensed health and happiness. All who have passed by have loved and respected me; all have spared my life. Wilt thou not do likewise?"

"Never have I seen a tree as beautiful as that of which thou art the soul, O Genie! That is why I want thee to sustain the dome of my palace. Thus wilt thou have the honour of being an object of admiration for future centuries. There will be no end for thee."

The Genie meekly replied:

"Since thou insistest to tear the body from me, do it, I pray thee, little by little: command that my branches be cut one by one and not allowed to crash down, before thy servants attack the main trunk."

"Why such a request?" asked the surprised King. "It is painful to die. Why dost thou want to suffer thus not one but a thousand deaths?"

"O King," replied the Genie, "hast thou not noticed that the branches of my body, dropping to the earth, have given birth to a great number of small trees? If these branches fall on them suddenly, many would be crushed to death. I do not mind bearing a lingering death if I can, by such sacrifice, save their lives."

The King, greatly stirred, rose and prostrated himself before the Genie. "Spirit of Light," said he, "thou whose love is so great as to accept generously to suffer for the sake of others, I will not cause thy unnatural death to add to my glory. Return to thy woods, O King of Trees, and be in peace."

* * *

This tale was related by Lord Buddha to his disciples when he was telling them of his transmigrations through the kingdoms, before reaching the status of MAN. It is included in the Jataka Tales.

Though having only three *Gun*as, or Qualities, Thou art the cause of all the worlds; even the gods fail, through want of insight, to measure the depth of Thy immeasurable power. Thou art the sustainer of all, the whole of this universe is only a particle of Thyself;—thou indeed art the undifferentiated first cause, the highest Prakriti. Thou art that supreme science of power inconceivably immense, which sages desirous of liberation, rising above every weakness, apply themselves to, with the inner power of their senses held tight in perfect control.

—THE SAPTASATI

ON THE LOOKOUT

THE KARMA OF AMERICA

H.P.B.'s remarks upon the unique karmic destiny of America ("Cyclic Evolution and Karma," *S.D.* 1, 634) lend important emphasis to a study of cultural comparison appearing in the Spring, 1952 *American Scholar*. Writing under the title, "Americanizing the White Man," Felix S. Cohen, a professor of law and philosophy, emphasizes the remarkable maturity which American Indian culture often represents—beside which the usual Western assessment of the Indian status in civilization seems incredibly childlike.

In pre-Columbian times, Cohen points out, some Indian tribes had instituted democratic government, abolished both wealth and poverty, evolved a tradition of non-injurious group sports, garnered a great harvest of discoveries in agriculture and medicine, and learned how to raise children who had none of the neurotic complexes associated with Europeanization. Cohen begins by reciting a dramatic incident occurring when a United States Commissioner of Indian affairs addressed a mixed audience about the necessity for "Americanizing the Indian."

A BROTHER'S VISION

A bronze-skinned figure in the audience arose. "You will forgive me," said a voice of quiet dignity, "if I tell you that my people were Americans for thousands of years before your people were. The question is not how you can Americanize us but how we can Americanize you. We have been working at that for a long time. Sometimes we are discouraged at the results. But we will keep trying. And the first thing we want to teach you is that, in the American way of life, each man has respect for his brother's vision. Because each of us respected his brother's dream, we enjoyed freedom here in America while your people were busy killing and enslaving each other across the water. The relatives you left behind are still trying to kill each other and enslave each other because they have not learned there that freedom is built on my respect for my brother's vision and his respect for mine. We have a hard trail ahead of us in trying to Americanize you and your white brothers. But we are not afraid of hard trails."

It is Mr. Cohen's task in "Americanizing the White Man" to demonstrate that this unusual Indian's words are much more sensible than

they at first appear. It was in the new land, described by H. P. Blavatsky as finally destined for the home of "a race apart," that the idealistic philosophy of the Founding Fathers finally came to maturity.

MORE THAN A REFLECTION OF EUROPE

America became a symbol of an entirely new orientation in human striving, and Mr. Cohen contends that some of the basic truths known to the pre-Columbian Indians contributed much to the vision of America. He feels that "The real epic of America is the yet unfinished story of the Americanization of the White Man, the transformation of the hungry, fear-ridden, intolerant men that came to these shores with Columbus and John Smith. Something happened to these immigrants. Some, to be sure, remained European, less hungry, perhaps, but equally intolerant and equally submissive to the authority of rulers and regulations. But some of these immigrants became Americans, tolerant and neighborly, as strong and self-reliant men may be, and for the same reason disrespectful of all authority. To such Americans, a chief who forgets that he is a public servant and tries to tell other people what to do has always been an object of ridicule. American laughter has rippled down the centuries and upset many thrones."

THE SELF-REGULATING SOCIETY

The American way of life has stood for 400 years and more as a deadly challenge to European ideals of authority and submissive obedience in family life, in love, in school, in work, and in government. For four and a half centuries Government officials have been trying to stop Indians from behaving in un-European ways. Once the battle was to stop Indians from bathing, smoking, and eating potatoes, all of which were supposed to be bad for their bodies and souls. In more recent years, our bureaucrats have issued countless orders prohibiting Indians from dancing (except after reaching the age of fifty), feasting, wearing Indian costumes, hunting for sport, traveling for pleasure, or otherwise engaging in the pursuit of happiness. Above all, they have tried to eradicate the Indian habit of sharing food and land with needy neighbors. The Indian Bureau is even now earnestly trying to implement the commandment once enunciated by a distinguished Commissioner of Indian Affairs: "The Indian must be imbued with the exalting egotism of American (rather European) civilization, so that he will say 'I' instead of 'we,' and 'this is mine' instead of 'this is ours'." Through four centuries the Spanish, English and American Indian Bureaus have tried to turn

Indians into submissive peasants. So far they have failed. To that failure we owe much that is precious in our American way of life.

HIDDEN HISTORY

It is in this sort of analysis of "American" history that we discover some of the really important trends leading to a changed basis of civilization in America. For one thing, the historical record of the "transformation of the white man" is clear enough when uncovered by Mr. Cohen. He quotes from a pamphlet, circulated in England in 1776, which comments upon the puzzling phenomenon of the changing temperament in the new land:

The darling passion of the American is liberty and that in its fullest extent; nor is it the original natives only to whom this passion is confined; our colonists sent thither seem to have imbibed the same principles.

Mr. Cohen adds that "something was happening to English colonists," and that what was happening occurred "in a land where whites were a small minority":

We need to remember that the Europe that lay behind Columbus as he sailed toward a New World was in many respects less civilized than the lands that spread before him. Politically there was nothing in the kingdoms and empires of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to parallel the democratic constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy, with its provisions for initiative, referendum and recall, and its suffrage for women as well as men. Socially, there was in the Old World no system of old-age pensions, disability benefits and unemployment insurance comparable to the system of the Incas.

MORE LITTLE-KNOWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. Cohen's documentation continues, doubtless to the amazement of many readers of the *American Scholar*. His statistics demonstrate that we have only recently increased America's corn crop—by forty per cent—"by re-discovering the Indian preference for hybrid corn." Also, "it is interesting to note that in the 400 years that European physicians and botanists have been examining and analyzing the flora of America, they have not yet discovered a medicinal herb not known to the Indians":

In medicine, as in the production of food and textiles, the conventional picture of the Indian as an ignorant savage is very far from the

truth. Until a few years ago most of America's contributions to medical science were of Indian origin. Quinine, cocaine, cascara sagrada, ipecac, witch hazel, oil of wintergreen, petroleum jelly, arnica—all these and many other native medicines were known and developed by the medical profession in America long before the first white physician landed on American shores. In fact each of these products was denounced by learned European doctors before it became accepted into the normal pharmacopoeia.

THE CRUX IS PSYCHOLOGICAL

It would seem justifiable to think, in accordance with the natural convergence of great racial cycles, that the pre-Columbian Indians fulfilled, by perpetuation of ancient standards, the task of cultural transmission of some of the eternal virtues. But since it can be only gradually that the immigrants and families of immigrants from Europe will shake themselves loose from the constricting Karma of a mid-Kaliyugic continental history, a full understanding of the process will also be delayed. Yet there is no doubt that, even today, what Mr. Cohen calls "the role of the Indian as a teacher" becomes more important. Psychologists have noted recently that even in the area of child guidance and training, the Indian is well qualified to instruct the white man:

In the field of child care, for example, one of the great forward scientific movements at the present time takes off from the simple observation that Indian babies, brought up in traditional ways, rarely cry or stutter. Psychiatrists, pediatricians and hospital administrators are now experimenting with substituting Indian methods of child training for the rigid schedules and formulas that have controlled the antiseptic babies of the last few decades.

BLUNDERING ADAPTATION

The American Indians have often revealed great moral strength in the practice of *psychological* non-violence. However bloody their battles and however crude some of their treatment of prisoners, their violence was almost entirely restricted to the physical level. But the whites who came to pillage and enslave carried their *inward* violence into every field of endeavor. As all students of Indian history have remarked, the Indian, though physically brutal, was much more a man of honor than his white opponents. He usually kept his word.

Through the centuries, the great adjustment to the new opportunity provided for the European settlers by the American continent has been

checked and interrupted again and again. But perhaps the violence of our traditional American competitiveness, the harshness of our medical remedies, and impatience and cruelty in personal relationships, will yet give way. We need, indeed, "our Indian brothers'" vision, and while he may represent a race now past the apex of its own culture, it is evident that he has seen more clearly than we. To study such an article as Mr. Cohen's will mean, for everyone, a lesson in the foolishness of false pride. But for the Theosophist a much more profound perspective also comes to light—that of the mysterious and intricate workings of Karma which provide the stimuli for a "changed civilization."

THE INVESTIGATION OF INSANITY

Publication of Harold Maine's *If a Man Be Mad* in a Permabook edition will be of interest to those readers of THEOSOPHY whose attention was called to the original 1947 edition by a "Studies in Karma" series (THEOSOPHY 36, pp. 213, 256). The conventional approach to problems of psychoneurosis has long been chiefly characterized by what might be called the "Aristotelian" method of classification, and by the amassing of clinical data in the form of case histories. But the depths involved in discovering the causes and most cures of what we call "insanity" call for the Platonic or Theosophical approach—that is, a delving into the conflicting motivations and scales of value which affect mental disturbance. Also fundamental, from the Theosophical point of view, is the recognition of the necessity, finally, for *self-cure*. Mr. Maine's *If a Man Be Mad* is an exceptional volume precisely because it is a "study in Karma," and the author's own expressed appreciation of the philosophical perspective afforded in the 1948 THEOSOPHY review of his book makes this doubly clear.

"MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM"

H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* prophecies in respect to the precipitating fate of "the European nations" may be a good point of departure for further reflection on insanity. In "Cyclic Evolution and Karma," she speaks of "Europe in general being threatened with a cataclysm which her own cycle of racial karma has led her to." So it must be with many who pass the borderline of what we are accustomed to call "sanity." It is also to be inferred, however, that such individual cycles of con-

fusion, too, will have their endings, and therefore the presently "insane" person can most constructively be regarded as passing through a difficult transitional stage, a personal cycle of karmic precipitation.

THE TEST OF THE FLAME

Equally clear, from the Theosophical point of view, is the fact that any trial by intense disturbance is also an opportunity for the purge of confusions. Many who border on the abnormal, whether institutionalized or not, may actually be involved in what amounts to an ordeal preceding further initiation into self-knowledge: all the terrors and fears which have held back the progress of the soul seem to leap into activity with mighty combustion.

Initiations into knowledge are often painful, forcing us, even, to pass through realms of monomania, yet may it not be that, at such times, some of our future lessons are actually being prepared for in the layers of the "sub-conscious" or "super-conscious"? It must be that psychological "knots" or "blocks" can result from prolonged tensions and conflicts, just as the flotsam of a stream eventually contrives a dam. The breaking of such a block would be, certainly, a terrifying happening, and might extend over a considerable period of time. It has often been said that those who suffer the most are capable of learning the most, and among those called "insane" are individuals of extreme sensitivity whose refusal to "face reality" was perhaps a simple desire to protect themselves from the pain caused by the paradoxes and cruelties of life. The motive of self-protection, naturally, must lead to delusions which are worse than the original pain, but each man must discover this for himself. Perhaps many among the insane *are* discovering this in the only way they can, in the meantime gaining a perspective on what we call "normality" which may prove to be very useful in the future.

THE WORLD NEXT DOOR

Mr. Maine is not the only modern author to encourage a sympathetic probing of the meaning of insanity. Clifford Beers' classic, *The Mind That Found Itself*, began a real trend, and some intuitive writers of today increasingly concern themselves with the philosophic or mystical dimensions involved in mental ills.

A remarkable novel, *The World Next Door*, by Fritz Peters, will strike many Theosophists as being a great deal more than fiction in its

philosophic insight. In one passage, two of Mr. Peters' characters, inmates of a veterans' mental hospital, converse together. They are men who have been gradually regaining mental and emotional balance, and at times have glimpses of deeper visions than those vouchsafed ordinary "normal" persons. (Those who have passed through the "fire," and emerged on the other side, sometimes manifest a rare wisdom and an essential calmness—an unusual perspective on what Theosophists would call the evolution of the *soul*.) Mr. Peters' inmates, soon to be discharged, have been watching a massed cloud formation from which a single small fragment suddenly breaks:

PAST THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

He looked back at the sky, lowering his voice as he spoke. "It's like us, that cloud. Don't know if other people see it that way, but the way that cloud's broken loose from the rest of the black is like one of us . . . breaking through the edge of the world . . . going out into space, into the unknown." He turned to me, smiling confidently now. "I think I've got something there," he said, beaming. "That's what we are, really. Pioneers. Pioneers of the mind and the unknown. Pioneers of the only thing left. Before, they had to fight snow and rain and Indians to get to the West, now we have to fight doctors and wars and mental hospitals to get to another world.

"The rest of them don't know, or they forget, but I can't forget it and you can't either. And I don't want to. Out there . . ." he looked at the sky again ". . . out there I found something. I don't know what it was, maybe I'll never know really, but I can see it in your eyes, so I know it wasn't just me. If I know you'll never forget that, that you'll always remember that you've been there, too, then I'll be all right, I'll know that it was not *madness* . . . that it was finding something, and something that was . . . good. I'm different now than I was when I came here. I'm not all tied up inside any more, and I don't hate. Almost as if what I found out there was something to do with love."

THE SELF-FORGETFULNESS OF SERVICE

The other veteran continued with some philosophizing of his own, and it is not difficult to imagine him, after his release, turning some of his energies to the re-education of those not yet through with the ordeal. (This Harold Maine did, after his "cure.") Peters' veteran says:

Whatever the doctors, attendants, families . . . the outside world might think of us, however they might judge us, we were a special

company and had traveled to a special place. If now I could succeed in my efforts to get out of the hospital, to re-assume a place in the so-called usual and normal world and at the same time retain the knowledge of the other world into which I had made my way . . . if I could accomplish that, it would give me a special stature and, somehow, a means with which to combat what I was sure the average world would thrust upon me, or upon any of us who had been in this place: the slur, the raised eyebrow, the reservation, the excuse, the mark of having been a patient. Experience was the real teacher; surely no experience could be entirely bad; it did not seem to me possible that there was nothing to gain from having been here.

One other contribution of importance may be noted in *The World Next Door*. Peters, again like Maine, and also like psychiatrist Karen Horney, demonstrates that "neuroses" and "psychoses" are latent in the very structure of modern society, with its sharply conflicting moral and economic counsels, its lack of integration between religion and psychology, between the Self and the Personality. Peters' leading character seems to have discovered, at least temporarily, the detached wisdom of an impersonal spectator as he remembers awakening from the stupor following his initial breakdown. "I could distinguish a form in what was supposed to be my illness. I had been both pleased and amused at the idea that, probably, the very core of that illness was the power I felt inside myself. Even to me, it did not represent a usual or normal power. . . ." He continues:

MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY

Was I now beginning to believe in my own delusions? Retreating into a world which did not really exist except as an escape from the real world, the tangible world of society which I hated, feared, distrusted and condemned? Or was this a fight against that corrupt and seemingly insane society . . . a society in which wars, insane asylums, prisons, electric chairs, concentration camps, courts of law, were accepted as logically and humanly inevitable? Escape or not, I was certainly not wrong to object to it, fight against it. And yet where is the limit of compromise? Where is the barrier at which one can stop and conscientiously, honestly say to oneself: "I am against this but beyond here I will not fight it. There is nothing further I can do about it." Was not the world a world of individuals, no matter how loosely or tightly grouped into societies, political groups, countries and little worlds? And if so, was it not the responsibility of the individual not to compromise? Not to stop there and say: I can go no further? Was it not up to the individual . . . to me . . . to say, definitely

and uncompromisingly: "This I will not do. This I cannot countenance. This is something I oppose" . . . And what was there to lose? Life could be lost, yes. But life was lost. Was it better to be killed on a beach in Normandy than in a prison as a conscientious objector? Was it ever *good* to die for the lack of a principle? And for myself, would it not be better, perhaps, to die as Jesus Christ, believing in and behaving in accordance with his . . . my own . . . inner principles and understanding; better than to make what could not be other than an odious compromise, an attempt to make peace with a world which was essentially alien and hostile anyway?

Or was this very argument a form of evasion of the core of my own conflict? The core which I could not recognize perhaps . . . and which now, as a result of shock treatment, I might even have forgotten forever.

SCIENCE ON ELECTRIC SHOCK

The foregoing "imaginary conversation" is fitting introduction for an inconspicuous item in *Science News Letter* for April 5, wherein it is remarked that "shock reduces tendency to see things in a new way." The clinical basis for this statement is of interest:

Treatment with electro-shock therapy reduces the tendency of a person to see things in a fresh way, members of the Eastern Psychological Association learned at a meeting in Atlantic City.

A group of patients at Payne Whitney Clinic, New York City, were asked to look at drawings used by psychologists to test perception. The figures are ambiguous; that is, they may appear one way or another and normal individuals looking at them will find that they suddenly shift from one appearance to another and back again. The rate of shift was measured for the patients and also for a group of normal students.

Then some of the patients were given electro-shock therapy. The reversal rate for treated patients dropped. For normal individuals, the rate increased with practice. For the patients who were not given shock, the rate remained the same.

Thus the Eastern Psychological Association seems to confirm unwittingly the view that interference with an individual's psychic difficulties may seriously retard basic recovery. It seems certain that the inability "to see things in a fresh way" precipitates "insanity" in the first place.

Mr. Peters himself advises caution in the use of violent panaceas. The following thoughts were occasioned by the first shock treatment

given the leading character of *The World Next Door*:

My mind seemed almost to have a life and direction of its own, sorting and rejecting, fitting bits and pieces of memory together, recalling names and people, groping for exact sequence, questioning and doubting. I wondered if there was any such thing as total recall, or were there gaps that I did not recognize as gaps, holes which I would never be able to refill if only because I did not know they were holes? Was it possible for any doctor, any scientist to conscientiously take upon himself the responsibility of attacking the mind of another human being in this way . . . firing volts of electricity into a man's brain without any positive and direct aim? What was the purpose? To make me forget something? But what, and how could anyone know that I would forget the right things and remember the right things? Was there some selective process in this bolt of electricity that had been shot through me by which only certain things would be obliterated?

BEYOND STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION

The *Science News Letter* quoted above also emphasizes, in another article, a fact of which clinicians can never remind themselves too often:

The psychotic person cannot always be distinguished from the normal individual on the basis of even an elaborate battery of mental tests, was the conclusion of two other psychologists.

They compared the test results of two individuals both above average in intelligence and both alike in age, sex and veteran status, but one normal, making good social and personal adjustment, and the other hospitalized as a schizophrenic.

The test scores were studied by two clinicians who had never seen the persons studied and also a seminar of 12 clinicians skilled with the tests. They were unable to say which person should be in the hospital, Dr. Roy M. Hamlin and Richard L. Newton of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh, Pa., told the meeting.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF DR. FREUD

Each of these perceptions obtains with a greater clarity today because of the life and works of Sigmund Freud. The *Menninger Quarterly* (Spring, 1952) expresses C. F. Menninger's recognition of this fact in a summary of sixty years of medical progress, and it is difficult indeed not to share Dr. Menninger's appreciation of Freud:

One of the greatest changes I have witnessed in medicine is that which followed the discoveries of Professor Freud. This was the

attempt to understand and explore the thoughts and behavior of the mentally ill rather than to regard them as completely alien beings, lost to their fellow men. Nowadays we all know, in spite of the prejudice that still exists, that we have a kinship with the mentally ill. We have a key to understanding them and to understanding ourselves better. This fellow feeling, as it spreads farther and deeper, through the efforts of people like you will do more to benefit human beings and to insure earlier and better treatment of their ills than any one thing I have mentioned. It is not as spectacular as salvarsan or penicillin or anti-toxin but it affects everyone of us, sick or well, and furthers "man's humanity to man." Who can foresee its total implications for the future?

ASTRAL REHABILITATION FOR AMPUTEES

Time for June 2 reports a new method of rehabilitation for amputees involving the use of electric arms and legs, with power supplied by tiny electric motors. The difficulty has been to find the simplest means for operation of control switches. Dr. Henry H. Kessler of Newark, New Jersey, has been amazingly successful in designing a control for limbs which is "naturally" operated by a flexing of muscles and tendons.

Theosophists may here see tacit recognition of the astral system, which is now granted a connection with the portion of the remaining limb. Patients are advised to strengthen and sensitize muscles which are needed to operate the control switches of the electric limbs. According to *Time*:

As an aid in rehabilitation, Kessler pointed out, orthopedists can now take advantage of the amputee's familiar "phantom limb" sensation, *i.e.*, after an amputation, patients often "feel" pain in the lost member. Instead of trying to get rid of this sensation, doctors in Vaduz, capital of the postage-stamp principality of Liechtenstein, have been urging patients to cultivate it, *e.g.*, by flexing the muscles in the arm stump, as if opening and closing the hand. Thus the muscle is kept alive, and rehabilitation (with an electric hand) can be speeded up.

BRAIN AND MIND

Time for July 21 contains some interesting excerpts from a lecture delivered at Cambridge University by Sir Russell Brain, "one of Britain's top specialists in the workings of the nervous system." Theosophists have an opportunity to utilize these remarks in a manner similar to that employed by H. P. Blavatsky in "Psychic and Noëtic Action."

Some of Sir Russell's comments almost duplicate passages quoted by H.P.B. from Prof. G. T. Ladd's *Elements of Psychological Psychology*. Sir Russell says:

I speak of the mind quite openly and unashamedly, not being one of those philosophers who make their living by expounding the non-existence of their own minds. . . . I shall assume that you know what I mean when I say that thinking, remembering, imagining, willing, feeling emotions and experiencing sensations are the kind of activities we describe as mental.

"ITS OWN SPHERE"

Sir Russell's approach to the study of the relationship of brain to mind is essentially philosophical. Medicine, he declares, has to be more than analytical—it must also be an art. "The art of medicine," he insists, "must never lose sight of the fact that man is more than the sum of his parts." In the eminent neurologist's words:

The brain has a highly complex structure and so has the mind, and we are discovering by degrees what is the relationship between brain structure and mind structure.

Though it [the mind] is linked through the brain to the world of matter, it moves in its own sphere as though it could soar above the physical.

The "art" of which Sir Russell speaks clearly enjoins its practitioners to seek a synthesizing grasp of the many facets of the mysterious powers of creative thought. The essential thesis of "Psychic and Noëtic Action" has been supported in this century by the writings of many workers in the field of philosophical and para-psychological investigation such as John MacTaggart, Macneile Dixon, J. W. Dunne, William MacDougall, and J. B. Rhine.

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